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THE

MESSAGE

of His Excellency

Abiram Chamberlain

THE

Gov'r of Connecticut

To the General Assembly

1903

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1903

MESSAGE.

Mr. President and Members of the General Assembly :

IT is my gratifying privilege to welcome you to this place of assembly dedicated by our State for the use of its legislators in the discharge of the duties imposed upon them. By the will of the people, an important trust has been committed to you, and in accepting that trust, you are confronted with responsibilities which demand serious and deliberate attention.

I am not unmindful of the honor conferred upon me by the people of this Commonwealth, and it will be my endeavor to discharge, with fidelity, the duties of the high office to which I am called.

We must not lose sight of the fact that we are serving the people, and our endeavor should be to render such service as will reflect credit upon the good old State of Connecticut we love so well and which has honored us in so signal a manner. Your duty is to enact the laws; that of the Executive, to *execute* them. Therefore it will not be the purpose of the Executive to recommend at length, but rather

to suggest such action on your part as he may in his judgment deem of special importance.

The opportunity to introduce measures for your consideration will not be neglected, and you will have much labor to perform in determining your action upon them. In a careful analysis, personal interest, and it might be said selfish motives, may be discovered in many of the bills offered.

Connecticut is a State of which we are all proud. Its foundation was laid by men whose memories we cherish. From them we have received a legacy such as no other people has inherited, and it is our duty to guard it well, that we may transmit to our children our own goodly heritage.

We have great reason to be thankful for the abundant prosperity which prevails not alone within our own borders, but throughout this great country. Let us therefore rejoice and give thanks to the Almighty Ruler of the Universe for the great blessings which He has bestowed upon this State and Nation.

Since the adjournment of the last General Assembly, our country has been called upon to pass through a deep sorrow in the untimely death of a great and beloved ruler, William McKinley. "The deep damnation of his taking off" by the bullet of an assassin, plunged the country into overwhelming grief and aroused the righteous anger of the entire nation.

The people loved William McKinley not alone

as President, but as a wise and good man. We take a just pride in the fact that, in passing through the great trial, at no time did our government give any evidence of instability; it was a critical period, full of danger, and if legislation can be devised that will provide needed protection to men in high official position, it is your plain and imperative duty to enact it.

Representation in the General Assembly.

Conditions have greatly changed since the written constitution of Connecticut was adopted. Its plan of representation was not entirely satisfactory, but it gave to the people of each town a representation sufficient for their needs. Under it our State has grown and prospered and the rights of the people have been secure; but with the large increase of population in a few towns, and the concentration of more than one-half the population of the State in eleven of these, there has been presented a problem the solution of which has received the earnest attention of many thoughtful and patriotic citizens who earnestly desire what is right and what is best for the people of this State.

It is my opinion that in the House of Representatives it is best for all the people of Connecticut that the people of each town shall forever have one representative, but it is also best for all our people that the people of every town shall have a repre-

sentation sufficient in number to carefully and intelligently attend to every matter of legislation in which the people of such town are interested.

While one intelligent representative will be sufficient for many towns, the large towns need and are justly entitled to more. Governor McLean, in his message to the last General Assembly, clearly pointed out the justice and the necessity of a change. That body took up the question and finally decided to refer to the people a proposition to call a Constitutional Convention, whose duty it should be to frame and submit to the people a new form of Constitution for their action. The people voted that such convention should be held, and on January 1, 1902, there assembled in this hall one hundred and sixty-eight delegates. In my judgment, there has never been assembled in this State an abler, more conscientious, and more patriotic body of representative Connecticut citizens. The discussions in town meetings, in the public press and upon the platform, and the debates in that body, have given to the people of this State an education upon the organization and development of their State government, the rights of towns and individuals, which they would not otherwise have obtained, the value of which cannot be estimated.

The form of Constitution submitted to the people by that Constitutional Convention was rejected doubtless because its plan of representation was unsatisfactory.

In my opinion, it is your duty to give early consideration to this subject and faithfully try to agree upon a proposed amendment to the Constitution which shall provide for at least one representative from each town and that the large population in the more populous towns shall have a representation larger than they now have and large enough to secure proper attention to, and exercise proper influence upon, all matters of legislation in which they are interested.

An amendment providing that the people of each town whose population was less than five thousand might send one representative, and that the people of those towns the population of which was from five thousand to twenty-five thousand might send two representatives, and that the people of those towns whose population was from twenty-five thousand to fifty thousand might send three representatives, and that the people of those towns the population of which was from fifty thousand to seventy-five thousand might send four representatives, and that the same ratio of population be observed as to additional representation from larger towns, would, it seems to me, be a plan of representation which would safeguard the interests of all towns and provide sufficient representation for the people of each town.

The people of the State adopted in 1901 by an impressive majority the constitutional amendment which provides for a readjustment of senatorial districts, and an enlargement of their number. It is

your immediate duty to carry into effect this mandate of the people, and to create senatorial districts as nearly equal as may be in population to such number as will best satisfy the public demand, and meet the requirements of the amendment with respect to county lines.

Revision of or Amendment to Constitution.

The Constitution itself provides a safe and I think the best plan for making revision of, or amendment to, organic law.

Finance.

It is my duty to inform you as to the financial condition of our State.

At the close of the last fiscal year the amount of bonds outstanding was one million six hundred sixty three thousand one hundred dollars ($1,663,100), from which should be deducted the civil list funds in the treasury, leaving one million ninety-one thousand four hundred and two dollars and ten cents ($1,091,402.10) as the net debt of the State.

For five years past the Treasurer has shown a surplus on the year's business in his reports, and for the last fiscal year this betterment of the State's condition was more than six hundred thousand dollars ($600,000).

During the last three fiscal years he has bought and retired one million five hundred and seventy-seven thousand dollars ($1,577,000) of Connecticut bonds, and during the present fiscal year, commencing in October, he has made further purchases amounting to three hundred and seventy-five thousand dollars ($375,000). Perhaps at no previous time in the history of the State has so extraordinary a financial showing been made as during the last five years.

After paying the bonds due the first of January, 1903, the balance and the receipts for the year will probably not be in excess of annual expenses and necessary appropriations.

Tax Commissioner.

The office of Tax Commissioner was created two years ago. The report of the Commissioner should receive your attention, as it relates to an important subject in which the people have ever taken a keen interest. While the goal of justice may never be reached, we must strive to attain that end, in order that the burden may if possible be made equal, as it rests at present on many of our people who look to you for a more equitable adjustment.

State Board of Charities.

This board has submitted an elaborate and carefully prepared report containing many important

recommendations concerning State paupers, almshouses, county homes, Hospital for the Insane, town hospitals, blind, deaf, dumb, and imbecile. The following recommendations of the board merit your serious consideration:

1st. That a system of suspended sentences with supervision by probation officers, be adopted for the treatment of juvenile offenders.

2d. That all the county jails be brought under the control of a State Commission of Prisons.

3d. That a State reformatory be established for offenders between sixteen and thirty years of age.

4th. That a system of district or county almshouses be legalized to take the place of the present town almshouses.

5th. That a new institution be established for the purpose of a State almshouse.

It is my belief that the State Hospital for the Insane at Middletown, the State Prison at Wethersfield, and the State School for Boys at Meriden are well conducted. From annual reports and other sources of information, I am satisfied that all the interests and institutions of the State under the supervision of the State Board of Charities are wisely managed.

Judiciary.

Your attention is called to the overcrowded dockets of our higher courts and the expense and delay of trials which result from this condition.

The excessive expense for probation and administration of small estates should be corrected.

National Guard.

The National Guard of Connecticut, in drill, discipline, and duty, has progressed from year to year toward the standard of the army of the United States. In uniform, armament, and equipment, our military force, in the different branches of the service, the infantry, coast artillery, field artillery, machine gun battery, cavalry, and signal corps, now substantially conforms to the requirements of the regular army, excepting as to the infantry rifle, and the recently adopted uniform regulations, which have not as yet gone fully into effect. Our general system of military discipline is based upon that of the army; the articles of war of the United States, in harmony with our State law and regulations, are made part of our military code and are in force in our administration of military affairs.

Before the Senate of the United States is pending a new national militia law, passed by the House of Representatives, designed among other things to provide more liberal supplies by the national government of arms and equipment to State troops, to bring the State forces into uniformity with the regular troops in matters of organization, armament, and service, and by encamping both forces

together, where practicable, to draw officers and men of both services into closer touch and so raise the standard and efficiency of State troops. If, after the passage of this law, any legislation at your hands shall be necessary to place our State in more favorable relations with the national government for the promotion of our military affairs, it will be my pleasure to make known my views and to ask your co-operation.

Naval Militia.

A seaboard state is vitally interested in the condition of the naval defenses of the country, and in the absence of any national naval reserve the efficiency of the naval militia is of serious importance. It is gratifying to note that the Naval Battalion of Connecticut maintains a high standard in this respect. The work of the battalion at sea during the summer of 1902 in the joint manœuvres under conditions closely resembling actual hostilities, was of great value as training and was performed in a manner creditable to the State and to the officers and men of the command.

Soldiers' Home.

This State should never be wanting in generosity to the man who saved the Union and kept old glory intact. No United States soldier in Connect-

icut, of honorable record, should be permitted to come to want. The Soldiers' Home should be a home indeed.

Education.

Connecticut has an established reputation for schools, and it is to *her* credit that she maintains a high standard in matters pertaining to education. Our splendid universities have given us a world-wide renown.

The modern high school and normal school, together with our district schoolhouses located in every town in the State, bear witness to the value which our people place upon education. Realizing the fact that our free institutions depend so largely upon the general intelligence of the people, you cannot fail to give a liberal support to all our public educational institutions.

School Fund.

The School Fund of the State appears to be in a healthy condition and shows careful and conservative management by the Commissioner in charge of the same. The amount of the fund has not only been maintained, but has been slightly increased during the last few years.

The income derived from it is still a prominent factor in supporting the common schools of the State, the amount of its earnings for the last school year having been one hundred and ten thousand

five hundred twenty-four dollars and twenty-one cents ($110,524.21) upon a capital of two million twenty thousand seven hundred thirty-two dollars and ninety-one cents ($2,020,732.91).

Steam Roads.

Your attention is called to the annual report of the Railroad Commissioners, exhibiting the large earnings for the year, gross, forty-five million one hundred twenty-five thousand six hundred forty-eight dollars and seventy cents ($45,125,648.70); from passengers, twenty-one million seven hundred twenty-nine thousand seven hundred thirty-nine dollars and forty-three cents ($21,729,739.43); from freight, twenty-two million nine hundred forty-two thousand three hundred two dollars and seventy-six cents ($22,942,302.76), balance from other sources.

The high standard of efficiency has made it possible for the roads to care for the immense and increasing traffic.

Electric Roads.

The electric road is a public convenience and necessity. Should the present rate of construction continue, all important points in the State, within a few years, will be connected.

You will receive many applications for new charters and for amendments to old ones; you should carefully scrutinize them and refuse all applications

which are made for speculative purposes or to prevent desirable competition by rival companies.

In granting charters, safety as well as public convenience must be considered. The latest improvements in power, equipment, and road bed, make possible a speed beyond the safety limit.

State Highways.

Every town receives advantage from the improved roads constructed under State supervision. The Highway Commissioners' report will furnish you with full details of what has been accomplished and its cost, and will convince you of the wisdom of the policy inaugurated eight years ago.

The speed of automobiles and other vehicles on public highways should be limited by statute law.

Financial Institutions.

You will observe by a perusal of the reports of the Bank Commissioners, Building and Loan Commissioner, and Insurance Commissioner, that the financial institutions of the State are in a sound and prosperous condition. An interesting and important fact is that the deposits in our savings banks amount to two hundred and three million five hundred twenty-two thousand two hundred twenty-five dollars and ninety-eight cents ($203,522,225.98), an increase during the past year of ten million two

hundred seventy-three thousand three hundred sixteen dollars and seventy-five cents ($10,273,316.75), which is substantial evidence of the prosperity of our State and the thrift of its people.

Agriculture.

It is gratifying to know that the agricultural interests of the State are prosperous and that the number of abandoned farms is diminishing. The use of modern machinery, improved methods, the application of scientific knowledge, the great markets of the manufacturing towns, the good roads and the trolleys have solved the problem, and the intelligent and industrious farmer is the most independent, and should be the most contented, citizen.

The Agricultural Experiment Station and Agricultural College are doing much to enhance the value of the Connecticut farm, and their reports, together with the report of the Dairy Commissioner and Commission on Domestic Animals, are commended to your careful study.

Forestry.

The last General Assembly passed an act, chapter 175 of the Public Acts of 1901, entitled "An Act Concerning the Reforestization of Barren Lands," and under this act Walter Mulford of New Haven was appointed State Forester. Two thousand

dollars ($2,000) was appropriated for the two fiscal years ending September 30, 1903, for the purpose of carrying out the provisions of the act. The report of Walter Mulford will be laid before this General Assembly.

The necessity of protecting the forests on account of the effect upon rain-fall, has been demonstrated.

The forests of New England have been cut off too rapidly during the last thirty years. Many of our towns and cities depend upon the small streams, whose sources are in the forests for an adequate water supply.

A special committee of your body should take up this subject, investigate it carefully, and recommend such appropriation as may be necessary to protect the water supplies of the cities, and the agricultural interests of our State. Many of our rivers have their sources in Massachusetts, Vermont, and New Hampshire. It would be well to instruct the State Forester to obtain information from those States and endeavor, by concert of action, to protect the sources of our rivers against the serious injury which would certainly follow the destruction of the forests.

Fish and Game.

Fish culture and shell fisheries are among the important interests of our State, and any legislation

which tends to increase the product to the mutual benefit of producer and consumer should be encouraged.

The protection of game should be secured by judicious enactments.

Public Health.

No more important subject can engage your attention than the protection and preservation of the health of the people. Each year much time has been devoted and much money expended to learn how best to guard against disease and contagion. The purity of water supply for domestic purposes, proper systems of sewerage, the cleanliness of towns and cities, quarantine against infectious diseases, the ventilation and sanitation of schoolhouses and places where large numbers of people are employed, protection of workmen against accident, purity and quality of food, cleanliness of bakeries, and many other items have, to the great advantage of the State, received the attention of capable and faithful officials. A perusal of reports of the State Board of Health, Dental Commission, Pharmacy Commission, the Sewage Commission, and Factory Inspector, will advise you as to what has been accomplished, and satisfy you that there is much more which you should provide for.

Public Buildings.

The business of the State has outgrown the capacity of the capitol. Many departments are overcrowded, many of the bureaus are without adequate accommodations, and there are not sufficient committee rooms for the convenient transaction of legislative business. Every important department of the State should here find ample and convenient accommodation, and I recommend that you take measures to enlarge the present building in order to provide for both the immediate and future requirements of the public business.

Louisiana Purchase Exposition.

An International Exposition will be held in the year 1904 at St. Louis, Mo., to commemorate the centennial of the Louisiana Purchase, which added to the domain of the United States of America territory from which have been formed fourteen States and Territories.

The Louisiana Purchase Exposition bids fair to excel in every way all expositions of like character heretofore held. The President and Congress of the United States have given it official sanction and a general appropriation of five million dollars ($5,000,000), (together with additional appropriations for government buildings and government exhibits) has been made. All of the important